MAJELIS AGUNG WALIGEREJA INDONESIA
BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF INDONESIA
MAWI
Sekretariat Jendral : Taman Cut Mutiah 10 — Telp. 356452 — Jakarta Pusat Tromolpos 3044 Cable : Kawalin Jakarta

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Letter from the BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF INDONESIA
to: the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Dilli, Msgr. Carlos Filipe Belo, and to the Priests, Brothers and Sisters of the Diocese of Dilli.

PAX CRISTI !

We the Bishops of Indonesia felt our hearts overflow with gratitude when the Shepherd of the Diocese of Dilli, Msgr.Carlos Filipe Belo, whom we greatly respect, accepted our invitation in brotherly love and attended the recent Assembly of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference in November 1983.

Thus we were able to hear directly from him about the situation and about the true feelings of the people and the Catholics of East Timor.
We were able to meditate on the conditions of the people and our brothers in the faith, whom we embrace in our hearts as friends and brothers sharing fully in their joy and in their sorrow.

In the person of the Shepherd of the Church in East Timor we have met in our hearts with all, but especially with those who are suffering, with those who have been wounded in body or in spirit, with those who have lost parents, children, relatives and friends, with those who have lost their possessions, with those who have lost any source of income and even with those who have lost their lives. We are not exaggerating when we say that we, the Catholics of Indonesia, are always close in our prayers and works with Monsignor, with his predecessor, with the Priests, Bothers, Sisters and all the Catholics of the Diocese of Dilli, whom we never forget.

We pray for all of those individuals who are suffering, that they be given strength of body and soul and that their Faith may remain firm. Sacrifice based on Faith, Hope and love has never been fruitless.

We do not want our solidarity with and our concern for the Church and the people of East Timor to be interpreted as any movement inspired by worldly considerations. Our attitudes and our actions are based on "the collegial nature and meaning of the episcopal order that found expression in the very ancient pratice by which bishops appointed the world over were linked with one another and with the Bishop of Rome by the bonds of unity, charity, and peace". (Lumen Gentium 22).

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In this same way there is a relationship among the Faithful from all places.

It is because of this that we cannot refuse to confront the events that are happening among the pople, especially those affairs which determine the welfare or the misery of the masses who are involved in or who are the victims of cruel oppression.

Thus, in accord with the wishes of the Fathers of the Council, we reaffirm that "the role and competence of the Church being what it is, she must in no way be confused with the political community nor bound to any political system". (Gaudium et Spes, 76).

Based on the above mentioned factors, the Catholic Church in Indonesia, which is ever conscious that our Founder and Saviour Jesus Christ loves all mankind, inspite of all restrictions has made every possible effort to express its solidarity and frienship with the Faithful and the people of East Timor who are being deluged by most bitter trials both physically and spiritually.

It is said that "those who dedicate themselves to the ministry of God's Word should use means and helps proper to the gospel. In many respects these differ from the support of the earthly city" (Gaudium et Spes, 76).
We present to the Faithful and the people of East Timor the most precious gift that we, the Church in Indonesia and the Churches in other parts of the world, can give, that is: "our efforts towards the application of justice and charity within and between nations" (Gaudium et Spes, 76). We give this along with the necessary aid that will help us to attain the harmony taught by our first teacher, Jesus Christ. We struggle so that with respect for all persons and with urgent haste we may attain first and foremost: a return to peace for all those who are now at war. We struggle through various ways to enforce acknowledgement and respect for those things which are considered most sacred by the people of East Timor: their religion, their family and their land. In other words, respect for personal property rights, a higher value for the lives and dignity of mankind and behaviour which is both civilized and just.

Moreover, we request understanding from all who control the decision making that any changes which will lead to a better situation can only be successful if they are carried out with a spirit of honesty.

We are conscious that the road to justice and peace demands an extra-ordinary sacrifice of feelings. We also believe that respect for each party will shine forth much clearer if they are brave enough, with the spirit of noble heros, to respect the human dignity of the other party. "Respect and love ought to be extended also to those who think or act differently than we do in social, political, and religious matters, too". (Gaudium et Spes 28)

We believe, that for some time but especially now at this time, the root of the problem has been directed toward the level of ability to understand the world of reason and of feelings of the other party, which in reality is most basic, uncomplex, and humanitarian. We also believe that the ability to understand the basic attitudes of mankind which are most simple and humanitarian, can still be found in both of the parties which are now confronting each other, but for the past eight years have been striving for harmony, justice and peace.

The sympathy and solidarity of the Church of Indonesia and other countries, with our brothers and sisters in East Timor who are suffering, is expressed not only in our prayers, but also in the form of material assistance, although from our hearts, we must confess that this has been a drop of water when compared to the ocean of pain that has been suffered by our brothers and sisters.

Following the requests of the leader of the Church in East Timor, we have tried to give special attention to the education of children and the formation of youth in the Diocese of Dilli, by revitilizing the schools. Particularly for the orphans who have lost their parents, we direct funds that might lighten their sad fate.

Not forgotten are the widows and young girls who have been wounded both physically and spiritually whom we support with skill training so that they may be selfsupporting. As fas as our limitations allow, we have sent medicines for the sick and the wounded. In preparation for the days when peace will prevail, we have tried to supply tools and equipment for workmen, who must find

a means of livelihood. Though the number is relatively small, we prepare teachers and others to serve along with the Catholics of East Timor, in fulfilling the needs of the Diocese of Dilli.

Truthfully, what we have done thus far has very little meaning when it is compared with the great needs and the large number of our brothers and sisters who are suffering. Nevertheless, whenever you , Monsignor, or your Priests, Brothers, Sisters, or your Catholics in East Timor feel the need to call us, we are always ready, in as far as we are able, to support the efforts of the Diocese of Dilli; whether that be with prayers, with material aid, or with personnel. We offer this in order that a road might be found for the people and the Catholics of East Timor whereby they will reach a standard of life that will make it possible for them to feel free and at peace to carry out their vocation in life as is befitting the most loved sons and daughters of God.

We wish to emphasize to you Monsignor, and to your Priest, Brothers and Sisters whom we love, that whatever the Church in Indonesia has done and whatever efforts will be made in the future for the people and the Catholics of East Timor, it is not given with a feeling of superiority, nor is it given from an affluence of material goods.

We pray that we will be servants of love in the spirit of St. Paul and that our contribution "will not only be to fulfill the needs of the saints, but will also be a showering of praise to God" (II Cor. 9, 12).

In closing, we turn our hope to God, Our Father and to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, and to all who strive for peace. We pray that we will never be frightened from searching for a road to peace and a way to avoid the sacrifice of more victim in the future. We pray and hope for a lasting peace and a return to true harmony. As was stated by the Father of the Council, "Peace is not merely the absence of war. Nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of balance of power between enemies. Nor is it brought about by dictatorship. Instead, it is rghtly and appropriately called 'an enterprise of justice' " (Gaudium et Spes no. 78 Yes. 32, 7).

Toward that end the Church in East Timor, which is united in Christian Faith, Hope and Love, will be the vanguard, holding strong until the above

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ideals are attained. This struggle will not only bring great blessings for the people of East Timor, but will also be source of many graces for the Church in Indonesia.

May the grace and love of the Father, protect and strengthen you, Monsignor, and your Priests, Brothers, Sisters, and all of our brothers and sisters in the Faith. May you have consolation and fortitude. May the Holy Spirit guide you and direct all of us toward the path of truth.

We join with you, our brothers and sisters, with Christ in prayer and in the Holy Sacrifice.

Jakarta, November 17th, 1983.

Brotherly greetings in Christ,

Msgr. F.X.Hadisumarta, O.Carm.
President.

Msgr. Leo Soekoto, S.J.
Secretary.